

## IX. LETTERS TO MME. VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

### IX. LETTERS TO MADAME VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

Mrs. Victor Remond was the sister of Father de Goy, a great friend of Francis Libermann. She wrote as follows about him:<sup>1</sup>

My brother spent three years at [the seminary of] Issy and had Mr. Libermann [who was then only a seminarian] as his spiritual director. During those three years, my brother told me, he never noticed the least fault in that holy young man, not even the small faults we so easily commit and for which we excuse ourselves. His charity towards everybody was always the same and it was very great. During his [epileptic] illness Mr. Libermann sometimes said to my brother: "How lucky you are! You will become a priest!" His charity and his profound faith were contagious. He was gentle and simple. . . .

I would like to tell the story of the great service which that saintly man rendered me. My brother had written to me from the Seminary: "Here we have a saint such as has not appeared for a long time and will not appear soon again."

Some time later, my brother showed me a few letters of Mr. Libermann and told me that his spiritual direction was so joyful, so delightful that—referring to our childhood when my brother used to keep some candy for me—he said to himself, this is too good [to keep for myself], I must tell my sister. But I replied that I would not dare to write to Mr. Libermann.

When my brother had been back at the Seminary for a few months I experienced pains which I now consider to have been caused by my arden temperament and my lively desires for God. I suffered heart pangs during prayer and they made me lose my breath. It was as if an iron hand were fastened on me and I was very much afraid. I then recalled what my brother had told me about Mr. Libermann and wrote to be introduced to the latter. Mr. Libermann's reply was: "Let the lady write to me, and if I

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<sup>1</sup>*Notes et documents*, vol. 1, pp. 444 f.

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

see that it is the spirit of the Lord who is guiding her, I will reply."

I wrote to Mr. Libermann and he answered.

79

*Libermann requests further information about her spiritual condition before undertaking to guide her.*

*Letter One          undated {1838 or 39}          Vol. 1, p. 445*

Dear Mrs. Remond:

You wish to ask my advice about the interior pains which it pleases Our Lord to give you. I shall gladly do whatever I can to be useful to you, if it pleases Our Lord to give me that grace and I should be very guilty of great ingratitude toward Divine Goodness if I refused to render you that service.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Remond, that I shall consider it a great grace the Lord grants me, if I can be of some help to you.

Reply simply to the following questions, in all peace and confidence . . . [The series of questions regarding her character and habits has not been preserved.]

Pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten you and tell me very simply the things as you see them, and then worry no more about them and think no more of them. It is to be hoped that the Lord will make known your interior disposition to me, as he usually does when it pleases Him to give me this grace.

I assure you, dear Mrs. Remond, that I am the most humble and devoted servant of your soul, in the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

FRANCIS LIBERMANN

*Jesus wants to live in you as He lived in Mary.*

*Letter Two*

*Vol. 1, p. 445*

*{Rennes (undated fragment), 1838}*

[Madame:]

Preserve a sweet confidence in your soul, for you are the well-beloved daughter of the Lord. Your life should be hidden in Him, so that you may live His life. He desires to live in you as He lived in Mary. You are an empty vessel which the Lord desires to fill, and if it pleases Divine Goodness, you will later better understand the comparison.

Here is what you ought to do. Entertain and increase the desire of living for God alone. For this purpose open the eyes of your soul and realize that you possess nothing of yourself, but that all holiness and all grace reside in Jesus. Have always a quiet and peaceful recourse to His divine bounty, for you have a very real desire to live for Him alone, but your desire is not yet translated into practice.

In regard to that interior pain, I am not able to give you my opinion, since I lack the necessary information. All that I am able to say is that it seems good rather than evil. I consider it as a stepping-stone, as a means to ascend to God. Don't worry about it. When you suffer it, abandon yourself to the Lord, your well-beloved Lord and Savior, in order that He may dispose things according to His divine good pleasure. Write to me every month or more often, if you feel the need of it, and give me an account of your inner being in all simplicity, as you have done in the past. Speak and act with a certain reserve more interior than exterior.

Tell me about your meditation; the length of time you spend in it; what its subject is, etc.

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

Entirely yours in the holy love of Jesus and Mary, in which  
I am,

Your poor servant,

Francis Libermann, acolyte

81

*Devotion to God Incarnate. Do not act for Jesus but let Him  
act in you. About ungratefulness.*

*Letter Three*                      {Rennes, 1838}                      *Vol. 1, p. 446*

Praised be Jesus and Mary!

Madame :

[*Devotion to God Incarnate*]

I greatly rejoice because of your devotion to the Incarnation. Make your meditation on this subject; it will be sufficient to spend one half hour in it in the morning. Begin by recollecting yourself and by placing your soul in a certain repose and peace before the Divine Majesty. Next, conceive a profound sentiment of your lowliness in God's presence, humbling yourself interiorly in the sight of your nothingness, your incapability, of all your miseries and all your sins. Then raise your soul, gently turning away your thoughts from yourself. Consider the [Divine] Word in His immensity, which fills the whole universe and all time with His greatness and His infinite perfections. See Him as it were reduced to a point, to live in Mary with a great love and an incomprehensible delight, and say to yourself that He desires to live in you with the same life of love with which He lived in Mary.

## IX. LETTERS TO MME. VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

Up to the present, you have considered yourself as acting, praying, suffering for Jesus, and desiring to live His life. Change this view, and consider Jesus acting in you with incomparable gentleness and peace, and desiring with a great love to establish His dwelling therein, as He has established it in Mary, and to make you live His own life; or rather, give yourself to Jesus in order that your view may be changed.

### *[Forget Yourself]*

Forget yourself: why always desire to be occupied with self? The fault which you have committed deserves reproof. The next time you feel this surge of revolt, remain for a time recollected before God in all submission and quiet. Afterwards speak very little, and that with fear and with peace. Wait before acting, until that feeling [of revolt] has entirely disappeared; or if you are obliged to act, do it with great reserve. Refrain also from making any sort of inventory of your faults.

I ask you one favor, Madame. Every time my advice is contrary to that of your confessor, prefer his opinion to mine.

Regarding those qualms of conscience which he was unwilling to accept, try to confess that fault once more. If he forbids it, be content with accusing yourself to Our Lord, in the bottom of your heart and with a spirit of love.

### *[No One Can Be Ungrateful to You]*

In regard to your saying that a certain person was ungrateful toward you, Oh! I fail to understand you! For no one can be ungrateful toward you. If this person received some benefit from you, well, she rendered you a great service and you must thank her in your own heart. I see no one ungrateful in all this, except yourself. Pray God that He may

pardon your real ingratitude, and do not imagine that anyone is capable of being ungrateful toward you. Far from holding anything against her, love her. You should wish her well and do what you can for her with all your heart, if it pleases Our Lord to grant you this further grace.

Entirely yours in the holy love of Jesus and Mary, in which I am

Your devoted servant,  
FRANCIS LIBERMANN, Acolyte

82

*How to prepare for Confession. Avoid impatience and pre-occupation.*

*Letter Four*                      {Rennes, 1838}                      *Vol. 1, p. 446*

**Praised be Jesus and Mary!**

Madame :

Purify your heart ; reject from your conscience everything that may displease God ; or rather, give your soul to Jesus, in order that He may purify it more and more.

[*How to Prepare for Confession*]

When you want to go to confession, begin by recollecting yourself and adoring God, placing your soul in calm and repose before Him, somewhat as in the beginning of your meditation, without however, going so deeply into it ; and then enter into a spirit of humiliation, sorrow and love, at the sight of your sins. Open your soul before your Savior, in order that He may look at your wounds and heal them.

## IX. LETTERS TO MME. VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

This opening of the interior of your soul must be done with all suavity, humiliation, confusion and peace. Consider your little child when he has hurt itself; he shows you his little hand, knowing that you will apply a remedy and console him.

After this, recall peacefully the faults committed since your last confession. This examen should not be done with precipitation nor in a searching way, but with calm and with a spirit of love. It is sufficient that your mind, filled with a love for Our Lord and always in His holy presence, consider its interior, and that your memory remain in repose, in order that you may read, as in a book, the faults which you have committed. You must never be anxious to know whether you forget some of them or not. All this disquiet and this intense application estrange you from Our Lord. Do not leave Him for a moment, but act always without strain or tension. Afterwards, enter into a spirit of humiliation and of love. Make your confession calmly, without haste or excitement; do it for the love of Our Lord and animated with a profound affection for Him.

### [*Avoid Impatience and Pre-occupation*]

I see, Madame, that you have a keenly sensitive nature. so much the better! What you need is to bear your trials according to the divine Will. It seems to me that Our Lord demands from you a habitual mildness in all your sufferings; avoid even the first movements of impatience. For this purpose keep your soul in great calmness before God; and if you have permitted these first movements of impatience, endeavor to remain in a humble repose before Him until they have vanished. Act afterwards with gentleness and a certain reserve. Do not give in to the itch for talking.

I notice also that you are a poor teacher! No doubt this defect springs from the fact that you are too preoccupied. When you desire to teach children, begin by removing any

*SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN*

manifestation of chagrin, preoccupation or worry. Your mind should be free as if you had nothing else to do or to think about. You must then come down to the level of the intelligence of the children, identify yourself with them, and, slowly and gently, try to infuse into their minds what you desire. This exercise is very good for you to develop the virtue of patience.

Entirely yours in the holy love of Jesus and Mary, in which I am,

Your poor servant,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN, acolyte

83

*Holy Communion and how to prepare for it.*

*Letter Five (fragment) {Rennes, 1838} Vol. 1, p. 446*

**Praised be Jesus and Mary!**

Madame :

Entertain and increase more and more in your heart the desire of living for God alone. In your meditations, follow your attraction and do not worry about the method. Be content to return to the latter when you happen to feel no particular attraction.

*[Holy Communion and How to Prepare for It]*

Yes, consider often the reign of Jesus in Mary, a mysterious and ineffable reign of peace, mildness and love. As regards Communion, it is generally proper for you to receive, and



## IX. LETTERS TO MME. VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

you should regard as a temptation whatever tends to keep you away from it. I am not of the opinion that you should stay away from Communion because of the person you mention. Ask your confessor's permission to receive Communion during the week, whenever you like to do so; ask him especially to be allowed to receive on feasts of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints to whom you have a particular devotion; determine such days and then make no more changes.

This is the way in which you should conduct yourself on these important occasions [of receiving Communion]. Prepare yourself for it with a great spirit of love and childlike confidence, aiming always at pacifying and calming your soul in order that the divine Savior may come and unite Himself to it in a more living and intimate manner than usual. When you have received Him do not act too much yourself, but allow Him to act in you; remain in silence before Him, allowing Him to animate and vivify you with His own life and His love, with which He comes to unite you to Himself, so that you are, as it were, lost in Him. Remain thus delivered and abandoned to your dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in order that He may dispose of you according to His divine wishes, and may fashion you according to His holy love. Toward the end of your thanksgiving, if you feel sentiments of gratitude and of love, gently yield to them, but do not act too much of yourself.

### *[Avoid Anxiety Over Faults of Weakness]*

Our Lord bestows a great grace upon you when He reproaches you for indulging in innocent pleasures. When you happen to have committed a fault of this kind, humble yourself before God, and elicit acts of desire to belong to Him and to do nothing except in order to please Him.

It is likewise a very great grace, when the Lord chides you for entertaining useless thoughts. In general, when you

*SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN*

are at fault, do not become worried. Your faults are usually but the result of weakness. The divine Savior does not abandon His well-beloved on that account, but takes pity on her. Do not fear, do not hesitate to open your soul before Him in order that He may see your wounds and your bruises, and heal them.

Do not speak much about your interior, do not ask advice from everybody, but gradually accustom yourself to consult God in the depths of your heart. Despise the flies of self-love which may happen to bite you. You say that your defects dishonor piety. But, Madame, imprint deeply in your mind that you are and will never be worth anything either for the glory of God or for His holy love.

Regarding your present difficulty of conscience, you may explain it to me so that I may give you my opinion. Do not yield to anxiety on account of the pangs of heart; they will pass. I beg of you, Madame, do not allow anything of what I write to you, to cause you grief. Take things with simplicity, according to the spirit in which they are written by me.

Entirely yours in the holy love of Jesus and Mary, in which I am,

Your poor servant,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN, acolyte.

*Consider Jesus living in you. Act with the freedom of God's children. Be charitable toward all.*

*Letter Six*

*Rennes, 1838*

*Vol. 1, p. 446*

### **Praised be Jesus and Mary!**

Madame:

I know very well that you wish to stop making considerations regarding Jesus as He lives in Mary; you would prefer to take this dear treasure in your own heart to consider and possess it in yourself. Behold Him then spreading and establishing His sweet dominion in your soul and organizing in it His reign of love, with so much gentleness and with ineffable sweetness. Do not on that account neglect or abandon His holy Mother. It is she who has led you to Jesus. Be always grateful to her for this favor.

Continue to make your meditation on the Incarnation, and during the day remain in sweet and peaceful union with your well-beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your exterior conduct should show the influence of this interior view and attitude, engendering great modesty; genuine modesty can spring from no other source. Speak and act with gentle moderation. In church, forget entirely those who surround you, consider yourself alone under the eyes of God and of the holy angels. I also wish you to avoid whatever may draw attention to yourself. However, I approve your practice of occasionally kneeling on the floor, when there are not many people present, in order to show your great respect for the most Blessed Sacrament. After all, the custom of using chairs in Church has not always existed.

In your Communion, in accordance with what you tell me, speak as long as the divine Savior places His sacred words

*SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN*

in your heart; toward the end of your thanksgiving remain in silence before Him, and do not act too much yourself. I approve greatly that you hide yourself in the virtues and the merits of Mary. Continue to act in this way, for this is excellent and will render you pleasing to God. Hide also in Jesus, offering His infinite merits to the Most Blessed Trinity, to make up for your wretchedness.

*[Be Free as a Child of God and Gentle Toward All Others]*

When I learned about "the terrible infidelity that oppressed your conscience," I was unable to refrain from laughing heartily about that "crime." The next time act more sensibly and with more childlike freedom!

Try, Madame, to be mild and charitable in all your judgments. I know that men are wicked, that they are all nothing but sin and corruption as you are yourself! But, if you desire to reach a solid and genuine piety, you must accustom yourself to preserve great mildness toward everybody, both in your external relations and in your judgments.

In regard to those uncalled-for praises which you receive, place yourself in all truthfulness before God, and then answer that it is not nice to make compliments like that. In proportion as the reign of God is established in you, you will grow in the discernment of your faults, your shortcomings, your failings and miseries. But you will see them in a different light, and will bear them with more gentleness.

It would have been a pleasure for me to see you and to speak to you about your mental prayer; and I hope, yes,

IX. LETTERS TO MME. VICTOR REMOND-DE GOY

Mrs. Remond, it is truly my hope that even in this world God will give me this grace and I thank Him for it.<sup>1</sup>

Entirely yours in the love of Jesus and Mary, in which I am,

Your poor servant,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN, *acolyte*.

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<sup>1</sup>During his first journey to Rome, Francis Libermann visited Mrs. Remond, but she failed to recognize him, and the humble seminarian did not reveal his identity.